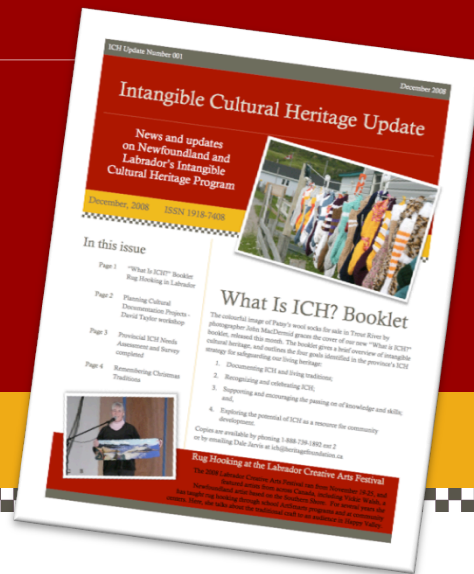


Intangible Cultural Heritage Update

News and Notes on Newfoundland and Labrador's Intangible Cultural Heritage Program

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50th Edition of the ICH Update

By Dale Jarvis

In 2008, the Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador (HFNL) was chosen to be the organization that would oversee the enactment of the province's intangible cultural heritage strategy. I took a one-year hiatus from

my job as provincial registrar for historic places, and took on the ICH portfolio.

The creation of the ICH office was meant to be a one-year pilot project. In December of that year, I started a newsletter, to help spread the word about the strategy and the workshops we were planning.

That first newsletter contained notes on a project planning workshop led by Dr. David Taylor, a folklorist working with the American Folklife Centre at the Library of Congress, a review of the provincial needs assessment we were conducting to see what workshops communities needed across the province, and short piece on a cable television interview I was conducting with two tradition bearers.

That one-year pilot project turned into a three-year project, and now is a regular ongoing component of the work of HFNL. And that little newsletter kept getting cranked out, every month or so, sharing news and research about intangible cultural heritage in Newfoundland and Labrador. Along the way we have had articles on a wide variety of cultural elements, from mummering to root cellars, from Newfoundland ponies to make-and-break engines, from children's games to oral histories of seniors.

We have had great contributors to the newsletter, including HFNL staff members, interns and board members, as well as special articles from our community partners and interested members of the public. It has been a great collaborative process, and we are open to more partnerships with people and organizations interested in contributing articles from their regions. In particular, I would love to see more articles from Labrador and the west coast of Newfoundland.

This month, we release our fiftieth issue, which seems remarkable. Thanks for reading, and here is to fifty more issues!

If you have a story or a topic you would like to see covered in a future edition of the ICH Update, drop me a line at ich@heritagefoundation.ca.

Notes from the Baccalieu Trail Heritage Forum

By Sarah Ingram

Early in March, the Baccalieu Trail Heritage Corporation, with some help from us here at the Heritage Foundation, held a forum for representatives from the 70 communities around the Baccalieu Trail. The aim of the forum, subtitled "Preserving the Past and Looking to the Future," was focused on discussing matters related to community heritage, future plans and how best to realize them, and opportunities for communication and collaboration within the region.

The morning consisted of presentations from different people involved in heritage projects, funding, and government departments in Newfoundland. The afternoon was formatted as a "conversation cafe" styled discussion, where the participants table hopped while answering questions related to the heritage in their area, what struggles they have, and how the Baccalieu Trail Heritage Corporation can help. The afternoon concluded with everyone returning to their original tables, and sharing the most interesting things they heard or learned that day. Each table narrowed that down to a top three, which was shared with the full forum during the final wrap-up. The full report will eventually be available by contacting the Baccalieu Trail Heritage Corporation at contact@baccalieudigs.ca.

These "top three things" have been compiled together and summarized to represent the positive ideas that came out of the discussions at the forum:

1. The role of heritage: it is not only the attraction; it is the reason for the tourism industry. The shift in focus from built heritage and archaeology to ICH assets makes things fresh, interactive, transmissible, and easier to relay to the general public and tourists.
2. There is the potential to revive the regional heritage connection and establish a strong communication link with the BTHC acting as an umbrella.
3. The idea of creating a value package – the BTHC has a huge role to play in this as a regional broker.
4. This conference and the open dialogue it has created. There needs to be a new generation of regional cooperation, sharing and partnering.
5. Youth involvement in New Harbour as an example of what other groups could do.
6. The Wooden Boat Museum of Newfoundland and Labrador as an example of success.
7. Baccalieu Trail's accomplishments over 20 years in terms of highlighting the region's heritage and promoting it as a tourism destination.
8. Great to know the committees are not alone, and now know there is the potential to share information among other organizations.

The forum was a great success, and the amount of information and ideas that were generated is a great testament to the drive of the different communities around the Baccalieu Trail. We are looking forward to seeing how this forum can help create new opportunities and connections in some of the communities!



A Polar Bear in Quidi Vidi

By Lisa Wilson

It is around this time of year that we begin to let go of our winter woes and look forward to warmer weather. It is also the time of year that we start watching out for the icebergs and ice pans that travel down the coast from the arctic, sometimes stopping to visit us in St. John's.



I remember a few years ago, in the spring of 2012, there was a particularly nice iceberg in Quidi Vidi that many people in the city went down to see. It had traveled into the entrance of the gut, and stayed there to slowly disintegrate and eventually submerge. It was a large berg, with a classic shape, and a bluish hue.

During an interview about the local fishery with former Quidi Vidi resident Ed Soper, I asked if he had seen this iceberg or if he had any other memorable sightings over the years. He immediately recalled one spring when a polar bear came to Quidi Vidi on a pan of ice. It was an unexpected visit and everyone in the village was worried about her welfare, and how they were going to get her back home. Soper, who was present during the ordeal, described the account for me:

“Down at the end there, where I used to live, we had a lot of waves come in. We had a polar bear one time sure, up on the cliff. One of the boys was out fishing and they had me come up. It was early in the spring anyway, and there was slab ice coming up and a polar bear was on it. So he came in and phoned the police and the polar

bear came in here and he got up here on the ledge. He climbed right up there!

The police were over here... there was a rail going right down along there that we called “the rail,” and anyway, the police officer was parked there. He had a high powered rifle and the polar bear was up there. Then Forestry came down and they tranquilized her.

All the boats were out there, the fishing boats. They put a net around her, they had a helicopter. When they picked her up, the helicopter, they accidentally dropped her in the water. Because they wouldn't have thought of it, they wouldn't ask the fishermen, the government.

Anyway, one of the boys out there, Craig McDougall, he went down, he grabbed the polar bear by the neck and kept his head out of the water. We brought him in over here. There was a slipway here and we brought him up. They had a crate there for him. She came to and they brought her up north somewhere. That's a good while ago, she's probably dead now. A female, it was. She came down on a pan of ice from the arctic somewhere. I don't know how, but she survived. A polar bear probably eats seal or whatever she can get her hands on, her paws on.

When the boys got her in to the slipway, there was a pickup there with a big crate on it, so she was comfortable then, when she came to, I suppose. I would say they had to feed her, even when they brought her up north. I suppose they spent a few dollars on it, but you know what? It's worth it.”

It has been forecasted that we'll see many slabs and bergs this year, and judging by this story, you never know what else might be travelling on them. We'll have to keep on the look out.

ICH and the Provincial Historic Commemorations Program

By Dale Jarvis, with files from Christopher Martin and the Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation.

The creation of the Provincial Historic Commemorations Program was an objective of the Provincial Cultural Strategy: Creative Newfoundland and Labrador: The Blueprint for Development and Investment in Culture (2006). The program is an initiative designed to highlight distinctive aspects of the province's history, culture, and heritage. Through this program, the province publicly recognizes people, places, events, distinctive cultural traditions and practices. The goal is to make Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, as well as others, more aware of those aspects of our history that make us unique. It is a citizen-driven program, whereby the people of Newfoundland and Labrador can make nominations that they feel are provincially significant and worthy of recognition and commemoration by the province.

This program is special in Canada in that it also recognizes aspects of our living heritage and our tradition bearers, those individuals who have played an important role maintaining cultural traditions and knowledge. As such, the program serves as a valuable tool for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in province.

To date, several elements of intangible cultural heritage have been commemorated, and the ICH office of the Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador has contributed to two nominations: the Christmas tradition of mummering, and the traditional knowledge surrounding root cellars.

In 2012, the province designated John Nicholas Jeddore as a traditional bearer. Jeddore was the second person to receive the designation, the first being noted musician Kelly Russell. Jeddore has worked tirelessly to teach and keep alive the traditional skills and knowledge of the Mi'kmaq culture in Newfoundland. John Nicholas Jeddore is recognized by many throughout the province and country to be an expert on Mi'kmaq culture and his efforts have ensured that his fellow Newfoundlanders and Labradorians understand how the Mi'kmaq have enriched the province's diverse cultural identity.



That same year, "The Trapper" was commemorated as a Distinctive Cultural Tradition or Practice. Though trapping had represented a small part of the overall economy, the cultural way of life has had a much broader impact. It united people from various ethnic groups into a cooperative society, encouraged exploration of the remote wilderness, and established permanent coastal and inland communities. Furthermore, the trapping way of life was central in a significant phase in the development of the province – namely the Labrador boundary dispute of the early 20th century. Testimony from trappers played a central role in the establishing the current boundary of Labrador on March 1st, 1927.

A very different commemorated Distinctive Cultural Tradition or Practice is that of Fish and Brewis, a nomination put forward by the Jackson's Arm Heritage Society. This food-ways tradition has been a staple of many people throughout the province and has a strong connection to the socio-economic reality of fishing families. As the tradition spread throughout the province it has been adapted and modified, providing interesting regional variations. Though the way of life that spawned this meal is in decline, the meal itself has remained a constant and has taken on the role of a traditional dish.



For more information on the program and past designations visit www.seethesites.ca/commemorations

Photos: John Nicolas Jeddore – Renee Jeddore; Fish & Brewis – Jackson's Arm Heritage Society.

